Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

Summer 1991

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Kenneth C. Smith named Department Director

The County Board of Supervisors has appointed Kenneth C. Smith as Director of the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. Mr. Smith assumed the post on June 3. Leon Arnold had been acting director of the Department since the retirement of Francis Ching in March of last year.

Mr. Smith spent the first week getting to know the staff and support groups at the four gardens.

"I am pleased to be part of such a great organization," he said. "The gardens of Los Angeles County have unlimited potential. Each has its own personality, and together they reflect the attention and care that have been lavished upon them throughout the years.

"I am totally committed to supporting the efforts to make this group of gardens one of the finest botanic organizations in the United States," he added.

Mr. Smith, 58, worked at Cypress Gardens in Winter Haven, Florida, from 1950 to 1990, the last eight years as president. The 223-acre scenic attraction employs 700 and has 1.2 million visitors annually.

He became executive vice-president in 1972 at the time the company became publicly held. He is credited with the attraction's expansion which doubled the size of the park in 1979.

Mr. Smith left Cypress Gardens last

September to move to La Jolla with his wife, Bette. He was in the process of setting up his own business when he learned of the opening at the Department.



Kenneth C. Smith

While in Florida, he served as vicepresident of the Southeast Tourism Society and president of the Florida Attractions Association.

Mr. Smith attended Florida Southern College in Lakeland and the University of Florida in Gainesville.

"Champagne Campaign" opens Descanso project

Descanso Gardens Guild kicked off their campaign to raise \$1.5 million for construction of a world-class rose garden complex with a champagne reception on the evening of June 14. KABC radio personality Roger Barkley and his wife, Nila, are serving as honorary co-chairmen of the campaign. The Barkleys, long-time La Canada Flintridge residents, contribute extensive time and effort in support of the community.

More than \$250,000 has already been pledged to the campaign including gifts of \$100,000 from the Berger Foundation and \$5,000 from the Mary Pickford Foundation.

"This rose garden will be unlike any other now in existence," said Gail Boatwright, president of Descanso Gardens Guild. "Two years of research and planning have been spent to create a rose garden in keeping with Descanso Gardens' naturalistic setting," she added. The new 5-acre complex will replace the original rose garden begun in 1948. Although the new garden will retain the historic roses featured in the old plan, it will also contain 17 themed specialty garden vignettes including a White Garden, a Children's Secret Garden, a Mission Garden and Empress Josephine's Garden.

Designed by Lawrence Moss & Associates of Montrose, the garden design emphasizes a free-flowing style that creates the illusion of walking through a series of small, private gardens. A stream will flow through the garden, relating it to the water features found throughout Decanso Gardens.

"We deliberately avoided the traditional style where roses are displayed in formal beds," explained Steven Smith, Moss' designer for this project.

After groundbreaking this fall, completion is expected by early 1993.



Admiring a rose that symbolizes the new garden project are (from left) radio personality Roger Barkley and his wife, Nila, Descanso Guild

President Gail Boatwright, Descanso Director of Development Sue Murphy and Descanso Superintendent Steve Cohan.

Jane Au: Volunteer of the Year

Jane Au was honored as the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens Volunteer of the Year for her work with the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation. She also received the Los Angeles County Arts and Humanities Volunteer of the Year Award at an April luncheon at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.

As president of SCBGF in 1984-86 and again from 1989 to the present, Mrs. Au has

spearheaded successful fundraisers for major improvements and garden maintenance at the garden.

Accomplishments during her tenure include inauguration of a new \$127,000 tram service, repair of the driveway into the garden and installation of new driveway lights. In addition, Mrs. Au's efforts have resulted in donations of more than \$50,000 annually by the Foundation for garden services, supplies and major improvements on the grounds.

Mrs. Au became active in the Foundation in 1980 as the volunteer in charge of purchasing, staffing and inventory control in the gift shop. In 1983, she was chairman of Fiesta de Flores when the annual benefit plant sale raised a record-breaking \$40,000. "Sunday in the Gardens," a program she started in 1984, is a series of horti-

culturally related lectures and demonstrations that attracts many Foundation members and local gardeners. Under her leadership Foundation membership has increased every year, reaching a high of 3,000 members in 1991.

Mrs. Au is also active in many non-profit organizations in the South Bay area. Through her personal contacts with other community leaders, she has made possible new cultural

programs at the garden such as Shakespeare on the Lawn, art exhibits and flower arranging shows. She also arranged to have the multi-national Big Eight accounting firm conduct the Foundation's annual audit as a public service for the past eight years. The Foundation office is now being automated with help she obtained from Epson for computer hardware and from Ashton Tate for computer software.



Huell Howser, host of KCET's Videolog, (left) and Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich congratulate Jane Au (center) on the awards she received for her volunteer efforts at the gardens.

Capping off Mrs. Au's successes was the completion and approval of a Master Plan for the garden. Her adroit channeling of input from the County, Foundation Board, volunteers, horticultural organizations and the Master Plan consulting firm resulted in a cohesive outline for the garden that will have lasting benefits for both the garden and the community.

Crowd celebrates Depot

Centennial



Five-cent popcorn and lemonade, pennyfarthing bicycles, Model A automobiles and century-old kitchen gadgets were all part of the 100th anniversary celebration of the Santa Anita Depot June 2 at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum.

Charles Gilb, Mayor of Arcadia, and Director Kenneth C. Smith joined in cutting the centennial cake, opening festivities enjoyed by more than 700 visitors.

Volunteers from Las Voluntarias y Los Ayudantes demonstrated farm equipment and household appliances that included toasters and cream separators in use a century ago. Docents also led capacity crowds on tours through the stationmaster's living quarters and office.

Lornetta Platford, a member of the Arcadia Historical Society in the 1950s who played a pivotal role in the 1966 "Save The Depot" campaign, was an honored guest. She answered questions about the Society's efforts to move the Depot and regaled visitors with stories about the history of the Depot and Arcadia.



Upper left: Director Kenneth Smith (left) and Mayor of Arcadia Charles Gilb, cut the table-size cake to start the centennial festivities.



Special guest Lornetta Platford, (left) is greeted by volunteer Carol Libby and Arboretum Historical Curator Sandra Snider (right).

Above Antique cars from the Santa Anita Model A Club turned back the clock for visitors celebrating the Depot's anniversary.



Leading the way, this future engineer takes an imaginary run on the century-old railroad tracks laid in front of the Depot.

Summer Concerts

J.

Arboretum

August 4
Friends of Dixie

August 11
Verdugo Swing Band

August 18, 1 p.m.
Laurel Woodwind Quintet

11

Descanso

July 21, 2:30 p.m.
Pasadena City College

August 4, 2:30 p.m.
John Sherman

August 25, 2:30 p.m.
The Verdugo Swing Society

South Coast

September 2, 4 p.m.
Palos Verdes Symphonic Band



Growing Urban Forests

Although there have always been trees in cities, the "urban forest" is a concept that is catching on for the first time among an increasingly wide cross-section of people and organizations. This reflects the growing awareness of the value of trees in our cities.

Trees provide important psychological and aesthetic benefits. The urban forest is the city's equivalent of the countryside, a natural environment which has been crowded out of most metropolitan areas. In the urban setting they also offer a range of economic and environmental amenities which are just now being realized. Trees can dramatically alter the urban climate in a way that can make substantial reductions in energy consumption. They also absorb significant amounts of gases resulting from carbon emissions.

Successful management of the urban forest is an art and a science which involves maintaining trees long enough for them to become a long-term amenity in the urban environment, while meeting aesthetic requirements that justify the cost and labor of establishing and maintaining them.

Urban vs Natural Forests

But trees have been growing for millions of years without the assistance of people. Why should city trees be an expensive and labor intensive proposition? Why not just plant some trees wherever we want them and let nature take its course?

The natural forest differs from its modern urban counterpart in many ways. In a natural climax forest, trees reproduce and renew themselves as a matter of course. There is a constant ongoing and overlapping cycle of renewal and decline.

In an urban setting, the offspring of highly reproductive trees are generally considered a nuisance. Trees that produce large quantities of successful seed should not be used in most urban settings. Most

tree species, however, can not produce viable offspring in urban habitats. Therefore, part of the challenge to urban foresters is both to select trees that are sustainable over a long term under the particular conditions in which they are to grow, and to enhance the conditions of planting sites to promote that sustainability.

Trees Respond to Site

The plants that grow in a natural forest setting do so because they are generally well adapted to the environmental conditions that prevail there. Nevertheless, more trees succumb to competition in a natural forest than survive to maturity. In the natural scheme of things, individual trees are of little importance except as winners in the process of natural selection; as long as the population remains intact in some form, a given species as a whole successfully occupies that site.

Mortality rates that occur in a natural forest setting are unacceptable in an urban forest because here each tree represents a considerable investment of time, energy and money.

In a natural forest, the balance of exposure to beneficial and adverse elements determines the shape or "habit" of trees. Those which must reach for sunlight through a small opening in a closed forest canopy can't develop the broad spreading crown that characterizes our most prized shade trees, yet may still be very successful in a biological sense.

In the urban forest it is expected that trees measure up to a certain standard of beauty and function. But left to its own genetic programming, a tree will respond to a restrictive environment in a city the same way that it does in a natural setting. The required aesthetic and functional considerations of the urban forest, therefore, require more than just an understanding of what keeps a given species of tree alive. Selection of a proper planting site, adequate site preparation, proper installation, watering, feeding, and routine maintenance are basic necessities. But effective planning and

follow-through also require an understanding of exactly how a particular species of tree adjusts its branching habit, leaf development, flowering and root development to the conditions of the space, both above and below ground, in which it will grow and mature.

Rather than thinking along the lines of modifying a given tree to fit a certain space or condition, urban foresters must select trees that require a minimum of modification over their lifetimes. The right tree must be chosen to fit the existing conditions.

The goal in designing and planting an urban forest is to provide more and longer-lived trees that will enhance quality of life in

the city. By directing more attention to the selection, planning and planting phases, we can reduce the amount of resources required for maintenance and replacement of trees. By using our resources in this more efficient manner we can obtain greater coverage, more continuity and increased access to the urban forest.

The author, Allen Howard, is the Department's representative on the planning committee for the Fifth National Urban Forest Conference to be held Nov. 13-17 at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

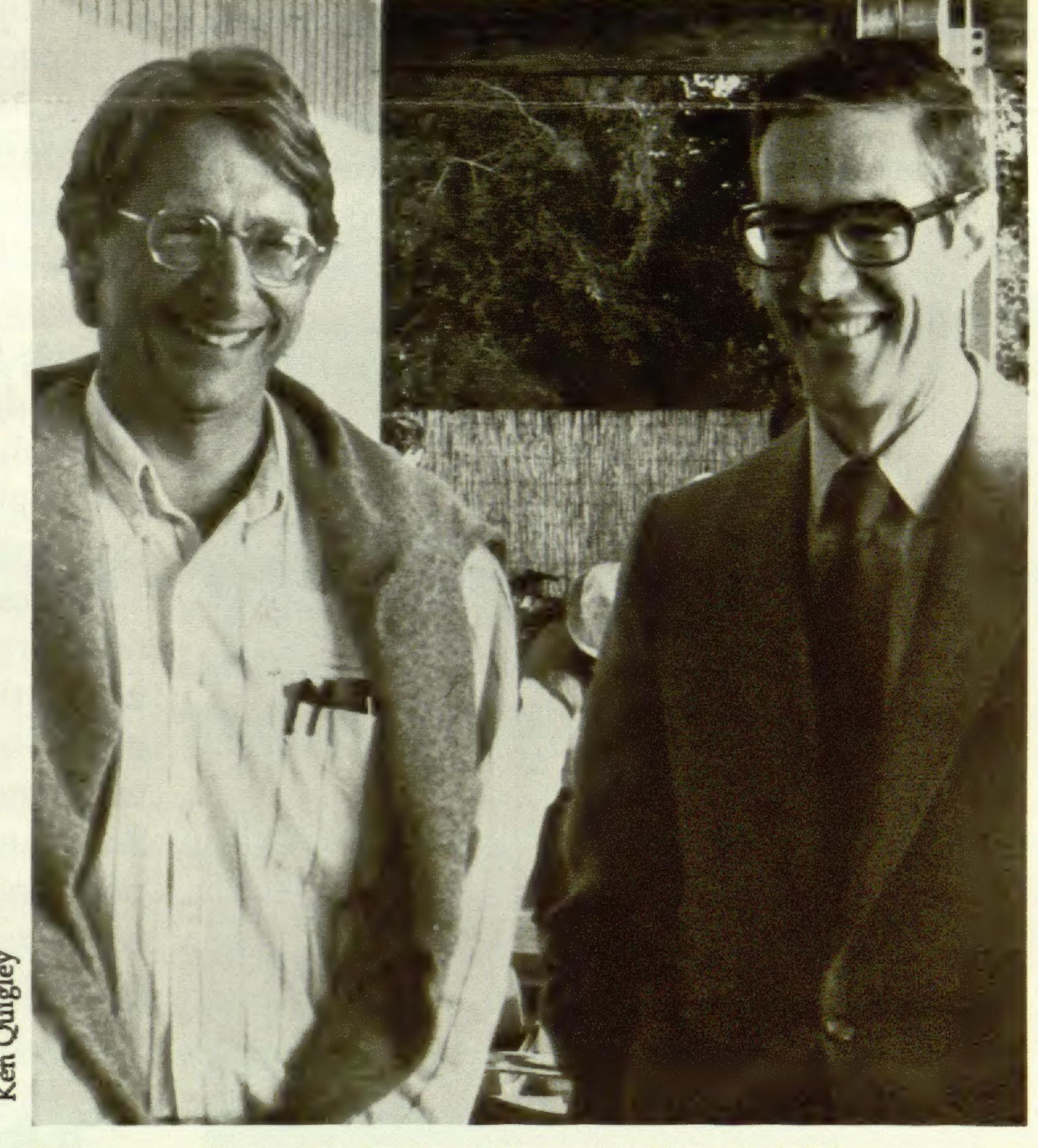
Baldwin Bonanza XXI

Drought tolerant plants, palms and orchids were the top sellers at Baldwin Bonanza XXI, according to John Provine, Arboretum superintendent. Co-chairmen John and Eva Shepard were in charge of the two-day benefit plant sale that attracted almost 4,000 people to the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum the first weekend in May.

Unusual plants from Monrovia Nursery in Azusa, Magic Growers Wholesale Nursery in Pasadena and Desert to Jungle Nursery in Montebello supplemented those grown at the Arboretum.

Robert Smaus, Los Angeles
Times garden editor, was honorary
chairman at the Preview Party
Friday evening. About 800 California Arboretum Foundation members attended to meet Mr. Smaus
and make early plant selections.

Profits from the sale will be used to maintain Arboretum programs and plant collections.



Honorary Chairman Robert Smaus (left) and California Arboretum Foundation President Richard Grant enjoy the Baldwin Bonanza preview party.

Botanists Trek Through Three Deserts

The rains of March had begun to induce the annual miracle of dressing the deserts in a bright covering of spring wildflowers when Arboretum botanists Suzanne Granger and Allen Howard set out in late April for an 84-mile rafting adventure down the San Juan River of southeast Utah. The appeal of a rafting trip was manyfold. In addition to the outstanding array of floristic and geologic features in and around the San Juan River Canyon, this stretch of the river is rich in unvandalized dwellings and artifacts of the mysterious Anasazi Indians who flourished here centuries ago. The only way to see all this is by small boat.

Driving to the San Juan was half the fun of the trip. Certainly the natural features encountered along the broad slice of the American Southwest from Los Angeles to Monument Valley was as interesting as the San Juan River corridor itself. This was a



A stunning array of distinct geological formations loom over the raft riders from any aspect along the the San Juan River.

special year, for the rains which produced the flowers also triggered a phenomenal population boom of American painted lady butterflies. The way to the river was awash with carpets of wildflowers on the ground underfoot and clouds of butterflies in the air.

This is not a barren and boring succession of empty landscapes, and certainly not a "wasteland." The route passes through the confluence of three out of the four great North American deserts and five floristic provinces which are as beautiful as they are distinct.

Beyond the urban confines of the Los Angeles Basin, one enters the southern margin of the youngest of our deserts, the Mojave, which is characterized by an open woodland of the incomparable Joshua tree (Yucca brevifolia). The Mojave is far richer in ephemeral flowering species than its neighboring deserts, the Great Basin to the north, and the Sonoran to the south. A prominent feature in the Mojave roadside landscape were bright carpets of the pale yellow desert dandelion (Malacothrix glabrata), interspersed with blue-flowered lupines (Lupinus), and Great Basin blue sage (Salvia dorrii), whose silver foliage and deep royal blue flowers rivaled the more cosmopolitan bright orange-flowered globe mallow (Sphaeralcea ambigua).

Across the Colorado River, one enters the northern reaches of the Sonoran Desert. Here, where the Mojave and Sonoran deserts intergrade, one encounters the rare sight of Joshua trees and ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), a Sonoran species, growing together. At one point, off the Interstate east of Oatman, Arizona, was a stand of Joshua trees up to their knees in a breathtaking three-foot-deep sea of white, foamy*Caulanthus*, a mustard, in full flower.

In this portion of the Sonoran Desert, just north of the saguaro cactus zone, the ocotillo's fountain-like habit, scarlet flowers, and green



Pale Mariposa lilies flutter over blackbrush growing among cobblestones in a relict hanging riverbed.

leaves are a dominant element, creating a dramatic display at any time of the year that rain occurs. Other outstanding blooms in this area included the scarlet and violet flowers of penstemon, which grew in dense drifts, the pale lavender flowers of the desert hyacinth (Dichelostemma pulchella), and the clear magenta flowers of the hedgehog cactus (Echinocereus engelmannii). Another prominent plant in both the Mojave and Sonoran deserts is the creosote bush (Larrea divaricata). This graceful, somewhat open shrub, whose resinous fragrance filled the air, was a profusion of bright yellow flowers and silverhaired seed pods. One of the many spectacular and iridescent blue-flowered species of Phacelia bloomed in its sheltering shade.

Beyond the Sonoran Desert are the higher elevation Pinyon-Juniper Woodlands, a serenely beautiful open woodland of low-growing junipers and pines, which eventually grades into a tall Ponderosa Pine forest in the high San Francisco Peaks area north of Flagstaff, where the spring wildflowers were still dormant. On the other side of the mountains, one descends once again through a Pinyon-Juniper Woodlands into the breathtaking grandeur of Monument Valley. Here the harsh expanse of the Great Basin Desert

was a pale green open shrubland of Great Basin sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata).

The trip culminated at the bottom of the San Juan River Basin, where an astounding array of desert and riverine plants were in bloom side-by-side. Evening primrose (Oenothera), blue lupine (Lupinus), and purple vetch (Astragalus) covered the high terraces above the river. Purple mariposa lily (Calochortus flexuosus), gentian-blue Phacelia flowers, and scarlet Indian paintbrush (Castilleja) formed a spectacular display high above the canyon, among the cobblestones of a relict, uplifted riverbed. Hanging gardens of pale lavender alcove columbine (Aquilegia micrantha) and delicate maidenhair fern (Adiantum cappilus-veneris) filled moist seepages of side canyons.

The deserts of the American Southwest are alive and interesting in all seasons, but are most captivating in Spring, when the many drought adapted desert plants show their true colors. Certainly many of these plants have a place in our garden landscapes, as well.

The authors are both members of the Department staff, Suzanne Granger as Associate Herbarium Curator and Allen Howard as Biologist.

500 Attend Third Annual Robinson Garden Tour

On May 10 more than 500 guests strolled through Virginia Robinson Gardens, featured estate on the third annual benefit garden tour sponsored by Friends of Robinson Gardens. Other gardens on the self-guided tour were an epic garden in Brentwood designed by Pamela Burton and Katherine Spitz, a contemporary California villa garden in Beverly Hills designed by Daniel J. Busbin, an English country garden in Brentwood designed by Richard Mosbaugh, a Mediterranean hillside garden

in Los Angeles designed by Chris Rosmini and an early California garden in Bel Air designed by Ron Sidell.

Mrs. Vincente Minnelli was honorary chair of the event. Co-chairmen were Gail (Mrs. James R.) Andrews and Karen (Mrs. Michael) Gould.

Proceeds from the tour will go to the continuation of serveral restoration projects and the maintenance of the Virginia Robinson Gardens said Friends president, Carol (Mrs. Douglas) Mancino



Co-chairmen Karen Gould (left) and Gail Andrews (right) greet Mrs. Vincente Minnelli, honorary chair of the third annual garden tour sponsored by Friends of Robinson Gardens.

Fiesta de Flores

Doubts raised by the drought and recession convinced organizers of Fiesta de Flores to look for different ways of supplying a wide variety of plants for the annual benefit plant sale at South Coast Botanic Garden.

"Our goal was to raise as much for the garden as we did last year," said Ed Hancock, Fiesta chairman, "but we didn't want to spend a lot on a huge plant inventory that might not sell." Twelve local plant societies added their stock to the plants grown by SCBG Foundation volunteers for the two day sale held May

18-19. Several wholesale growers also supplied an assortment of colorful annuals perennials, shrubs and trees.

As a result, the sale attracted more than 2,500 shoppers and grossed over \$50,000 to help support the garden's programs.

About 800 Foundation members and guests attended the Preview Party the evening of May 17. Besides the opportunity to select their plants early, party goers could win a cruise to Bermuda and many other raffle prizes.

Irma Diaz: Employee of the Year

Irma Diaz, has been named Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens Employee of the Year. In April she received a plaque at a reception recognizing county employees for their dedication and hard work.

Employed at the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum for 5 1/2 years, Irma started as the receptionist and was promoted to intermediate clerk typist. As automation became a part of the gardens, Irma adapted easily.

When the antiquated telephones were replaced with a modern, more complicated, system, Irma learned all the fine points and then helped the staff members who kept calling and coming to her with questions.

A new phone system is not the only obstacle Irma has overcome in her career. Growing up in a Spanish-speaking family, she didn't learn English until she started school. Now she speaks it without the trace of an accent. But she still uses her language skills when asked to translate for the garden's many Hispanic visitors. When thanked for her help, Irma usually responds with, "That's okay, it was nothing."

Besides attending Rio Hondo College, Irma helps her husband with his Little League coaching and her son and daughter with their



Her red wagon filled with colorful flowers, this little shopper is ready for spring planting.

education. She is also coordinator of religious education at Epiphany Parish in South El Monte. Every Saturday morning during the



Irma Diaz receives congratulations and a scroll from Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich..

school year, Irma is the lay leader responsible for 250 young people from kindergarten through fifth grade. She oversees 27 teachers and reports directly to the nun who is the Director of Religious Education.

Irma's weekdays are just as busy as her weekends. Besides handling the switch-board, she has taken over many vital functions that were handled by others before the Department staff was reduced. Every day she prepares deposit slips for attendance receipts and compiles attendance reports. She also mastered computer spreadsheet programs to handle various reports and budgets.

Irma also helps plan, decorate and even clean up for the Department's Christmas party and fund raisers. Always cheerful, she is willing to lend a hand to anyone who asks her, no matter what the task. Irma's modesty is sincere; whenever she receives compliments, she says, "It's only my job."

GARDEN EVENTS

July 5- 7	Cactus and Succulent Show Arboretum 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cactus and Succulent Society of America displays thousands of exotic and local cacti and succulents. Thousands of plants sold. Members available to answer questions.	Aug. 17- 18	Dahlia Show South Coast Botanic Garden Sat. 12-4:30, Sun. 9-4 p.m. South Coast Dahlia Society features individual flowers and arrangements. Blooms from one inch to 12 inches across in a variety of colors.
July 27- 28	Begonia Show Arboretum 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. San Gabriel Valley Begonia Society features cane-type varieties with colorful clusters. Begonias and companion shade plants for sale.	31-	Fern and Exotic Plant Sale Arboretum 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Los Angeles International Fern Society fills Ayres Hall. Lectures at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. each day.
Aug. 3-	Bromeliad Show and Sale South Coast Botanic Garden Sat. 12-4:30., Sun. 10-4:30 p.m. South Bay Bromeliad Associates display prized specimens, on-going demonstrations and rare and exotic plants for sale.	Sept. 2	Free Picnic and Concert South Coast Botanic Garden 4 p.m. to dusk Palos Verdes Symphonic Band takes the labor out of the day with a free concert in the Upper Meadow. Bring a picnic and relax.



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